

FK MEDIA — LIGHTING EDUCATION SERIES

— CHAPTER 01 —

Guess How I Lit This

1-Light Setups — How a single flash can create front light, side light, and back light using only the clock concept.

● BEGINNER + INTERMEDIATE

● 1 FLASH (GODOX)

● 6 SETUPS COVERED

● FREE LIGHTING SHEET

HOW THIS WORKS

Every episode of *Guess How I Lit This* gives you 10 seconds to guess: how many lights, what direction, and what modifier. This mini course is the breakdown — the answer reveal, the diagram, and the downloadable sheet so you can replicate every single setup.

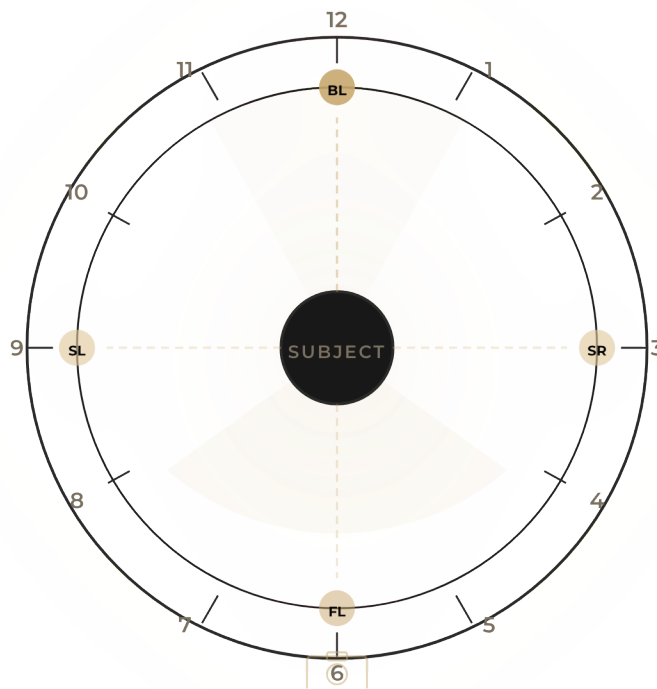
Chapter 1 is all about what you can do with just one light. Before you ever add a second flash, you need to understand how moving a single light around a subject completely changes the mood, shape, and story of your image.

THE FRAMEWORK

The Clock Concept

Think of your subject sitting in the center of a clock face. Your light is the hand.

Where you place it determines everything.



6 O'CLOCK

Front Lighting

Light is between the camera and subject. Flat, even, fills shadows. Great for e-commerce.

3 OR 9 O'CLOCK

Side Lighting

Light is 90° to the subject. Creates strong shadow and texture. Dramatic and editorial.

12 O'CLOCK

Back Lighting

Light is behind the subject, pointed at the camera. Creates rim light, glow, and atmosphere.

7-8 OR 4-5 O'CLOCK

$\frac{3}{4}$ Front Light

Light is angled between front and side. The most flattering, natural-looking setup.

10-11 OR 1-2 O'CLOCK

$\frac{3}{4}$ Back Light

Light angles from behind, wrapping the subject edge. Creates a glowing rim effect.

ANYWHERE + REFLECTOR

1 Light + Fill

Add a white card or silver reflector opposite the light to bounce and soften shadows.

INTERACTIVE TOOL

Lighting Position Simulator

Drag the light around the clock. Swap modifiers and subjects. Watch the camera view update live.

SUBJECT

BOTTLE

BURGER

SKINCARE

MODIFIER

BARE FLASH

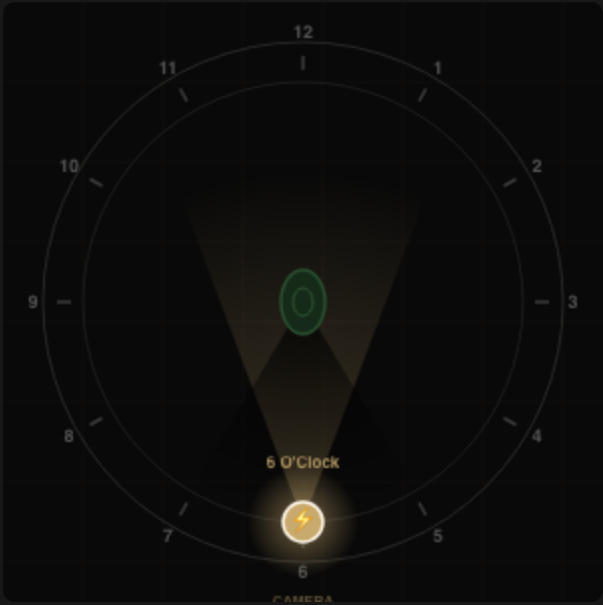
SOFTBOX

GRID

UMBRELLA

TOP-DOWN DIAGRAM

— DRAG THE LIGHT —



CAMERA VIEW

— LIGHTING RESULT —



CLOCK POSITION

6 O'Clock

LIGHT DIRECTION

Front Light

MODIFIER

Softbox (Soft)

SHADOW EDGE

Soft



Front Light (6 O'Clock): Light between camera and subject. Shadows hidden behind. Clean, flat, commercial.

01

1 LIGHT — SOFTBOX OR UMBRELLA

Front Lighting

CLOCK POSITION: **6 O'CLOCK**



LIGHTING DIAGRAM FRONT LIGHT — 6 O'CLOCK

Upload: 1 Light Softbox.jpg or 1 Light Front Right.jpg



EXAMPLE SHOT FRONT LIGHTING RESULT

Upload: example food/product shot lit from 6 o'clock

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The light sits just above and behind the camera, aimed directly at the subject. Because the light and camera share almost the same angle, shadows fall directly behind the subject — hidden from camera view. The result is a clean, flat, evenly lit image.

- Low contrast — shadows are minimal to none
- Colors appear saturated and true
- Ideal for product e-commerce, menus, and brand shots where clarity is priority
- Raise the light slightly to create subtle top-down shadows under the chin of food



Pro tip: Front lighting can feel flat if your subject has no texture. Use a slightly rougher surface (wood, slate, linen) to give depth to an otherwise even setup. The texture does the work the shadow can't.

LIGHTS 1 Flash (Godox AD200 or equivalent)

POSITION 6 O'Clock — directly in front of subject, slightly above camera height

MODIFIER Softbox (60x90cm) or shoot-through umbrella for softer spread

POWER [INSERT — e.g. 1/4 power at 3ft]

CAMERA [INSERT — Aperture / ISO / Shutter]

REFLECTOR Not needed — optional white card behind subject to fill any edge shadow

BEST FOR E-commerce, menus, clean product shots, bright editorial

MOOD Clean · Flat · Commercial · Bright

02

1 LIGHT — SOFTBOX

$\frac{3}{4}$ Front Lighting

CLOCK POSITION: **7-8 OR 4-5 O'CLOCK**



LIGHTING DIAGRAM
 $\frac{3}{4}$ FRONT — 7 OR 8 O'CLOCK

Upload: 1 Key Light + Reflector - 7 O'Clock.jpg



EXAMPLE SHOT
 $\frac{3}{4}$ FRONT LIGHTING RESULT

Upload: example shot lit from 7-8 o'clock

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The light moves off-axis — roughly 45° to the left or right of the camera. This is the sweet spot between flat front light and dramatic side light. You get dimension without extreme shadow. One side of the subject is lit, the other falls into a soft gradient shadow.

- Creates shape and volume — the subject looks 3-dimensional
- Shadow falls gradually — still readable on dark backgrounds
- Pair with a white card opposite the light to control how deep that shadow goes
- Move the light further toward 9 for more drama, closer to 6 for more fill



Pro tip: This is the most versatile 1-light setup. If you shoot food, start here. Angle at 7–8 o'clock, large softbox, white card on the opposite side — you have a professional result before you ever add a second light.

LIGHTS 1 Flash (Godox AD200 or equivalent)

POSITION 7–8 or 4–5 O’Clock — 45° off camera axis, slightly above subject

MODIFIER Large softbox (60×90cm or larger) — soft and wrapping

POWER [INSERT — e.g. 1/4 power at 2.5ft]

CAMERA [INSERT — Aperture / ISO / Shutter]

REFLECTOR White card stock — opposite the light, 1–2ft from subject, to fill shadow side

BEST FOR Food photography, portraits, lifestyle product, cocktails

MOOD Warm · Dimensional · Natural · Versatile

03

1 LIGHT — SOFTBOX OR HARD LIGHT

Side Lighting

CLOCK POSITION: **9 OR 3 O'CLOCK**



LIGHTING DIAGRAM SIDE LIGHT — 9 O'CLOCK

Upload: 1 Key Light + Reflector - Side Light 9 O'Clock.jpg



EXAMPLE SHOT SIDE LIGHTING RESULT

Upload: example shot lit from 9 o'clock — dramatic texture shot

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The light is at a perfect 90° to the subject — coming from the direct left (9 o'clock) or right (3 o'clock). Half of the subject is fully lit. The other half falls into deep shadow. The transition between the two is called the terminator line, and it reveals every texture, detail, and imperfection.

- Maximum contrast — the most dramatic single-light result
- Textures pop: wood grain, bread crust, fabric, condensation on glass
- Hard light from the side (bare flash or gridded) creates the hardest shadow edge
- A softbox from the side wraps the light slightly — still dramatic but cleaner transition



Pro tip: Use a silver reflector on the shadow side to bring back just a touch of detail. Unlike a white card (which bounces softly), silver is more aggressive — you get texture detail without killing the dramatic mood.

LIGHTS 1 Flash (Godox AD200 or equivalent)

POSITION 9 or 3 O'Clock — 90° to the subject, at or slightly above subject height

MODIFIER Softbox (for clean drama) or bare flash / gridded head (for hard shadow)

POWER [INSERT — e.g. 1/8 power at 2ft]

CAMERA [INSERT — Aperture / ISO / Shutter]

REFLECTOR Optional: silver reflector on shadow side — adds detail without filling entirely

BEST FOR Textured subjects, bread, steak, cocktails, editorial bar shots

MOOD Dramatic · Moody · Editorial · High Contrast

04

1 LIGHT — SOFTBOX

$\frac{3}{4}$ Back Lighting

CLOCK POSITION: 10-11 OR 1-2 O'CLOCK



LIGHTING DIAGRAM

 $\frac{3}{4}$ BACK LIGHT — 10 O'CLOCK

Upload: Soft Light - Back Light 10 O Clock.jpg



EXAMPLE SHOT

 $\frac{3}{4}$ BACK LIGHTING RESULT

Upload: example shot lit from 10-11 o'clock — rim glow, atmospheric

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The light is now behind the subject, angled at 45° — so it catches the rear edge of the subject and wraps slightly around the side closest to it. The front of the subject receives almost no direct light, creating a rim or halo effect. This is where liquids, steam, and translucent subjects come alive.

- Creates a glowing rim along the back edge of the subject
- Translucent subjects (glass, liquid, sauce) catch the light and glow internally
- The front of the subject will be dark — use a white card to bounce ambient fill back
- Works especially well when there's steam, smoke, or condensation to backlight



Pro tip: When shooting cocktails or beverages, $\frac{3}{4}$ back light is your default. Position the light at 10 o'clock, aim down at 30° into the glass — the liquid catches the light from inside and glows. Add a white card at 4 o'clock to keep the label readable.

LIGHTS 1 Flash (Godox AD200 or equivalent)

POSITION 10–11 or 1–2 O’Clock — angled behind and to the side, aimed down into subject

MODIFIER Softbox for wrap, or bare flash for hard rim — depends on mood

POWER [INSERT — e.g. 1/4 power at 2ft behind subject]

CAMERA [INSERT — Aperture / ISO / Shutter]

REFLECTOR White card — opposite at 4–5 o’clock, bounces fill onto front of subject

BEST FOR Cocktails, spirits, steam, translucent subjects, atmospheric food

MOOD Atmospheric · Glowing · Premium · Cinematic

05

1 LIGHT — SOFTBOX OR BARE FLASH

Back Lighting

CLOCK POSITION: 12 O'CLOCK



LIGHTING DIAGRAM BACK LIGHT — 12 O'CLOCK

Upload: 3:4 Back Lighting.jpg or Hero Diagram.jpg



EXAMPLE SHOT BACK LIGHTING RESULT

Upload: Hero Shot Cocktail.jpg or back-lit food shot

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The light is directly behind the subject, pointed toward the camera. The subject is almost entirely in shadow from the camera's view — only a thin rim of light wraps around its silhouette. This is the most advanced 1-light position because it requires the most management.

- Creates a powerful silhouette or rim-lit hero shot
- Use a large softbox high and behind to create a halo effect across the top
- A white card close to the subject at 6 o'clock is almost always needed to recover front detail
- Watch for lens flare — slight angle adjustments can eliminate or harness it creatively



Pro tip: Back light + white card is actually a 2-element setup using 1 light. The card becomes your secondary "light source." Move it closer to the subject and it fills more. Move it further and it goes dark. You have a lot of control with one flash.

LIGHTS 1 Flash (Godox AD200 or equivalent)

POSITION 12 O'Clock — directly behind subject, aimed toward camera (flag if needed)

MODIFIER Large softbox above and behind, or bare flash angled down from height

POWER [INSERT — e.g. 1/2 power at 3ft behind subject]

CAMERA [INSERT — Aperture / ISO / Shutter]

REFLECTOR White card close at 6 o'clock — essential to bring front detail back

BEST FOR Hero shots, rim-lit burgers, silhouette plating shots, atmospheric editorial

MOOD Bold · Dramatic · Cinematic · Hero

06

1 LIGHT + MODIFIER — ANY POSITION

1 Light + Reflector

CLOCK POSITION: **YOUR CHOICE — REFLECTOR OPPOSITE**

Adding a reflector doesn't change the number of lights — but it fundamentally changes the image. Think of a reflector as a free, controllable second source. Here's what each modifier does:



WHITE CARD STOCK

Soft, subtle bounce. Fills shadows gently without overpowering the light. Best for food and controlled fills.



SILVER REFLECTOR

Brighter, more directional bounce. Brings back texture detail in shadows without fully filling them.



BLACK CARD (FLAG)

Absorbs light rather than reflecting it. Used to deepen shadows on the opposite side for more drama.



DIAGRAM — 1 LIGHT + WHITE CARD 7 O'CLOCK KEY + 1-2 O'CLOCK WHITE CARD

Upload: 1 Key Light + Reflector - 7 O Clock.jpg



EXAMPLE SHOT 1 LIGHT + REFLECTOR FILL RESULT

Upload: example showing visible shadow-side fill from white card



The rule: Reflector goes on the opposite side of your light. Light at 7 o'clock → white card at 1-2 o'clock. Light at 9 o'clock → silver reflector at 3 o'clock. Distance controls fill intensity — closer = more fill, further = less.

LIGHTS 1 Flash (Godox AD200 or equivalent)

POSITION Any — most common: 7–8 o'clock with white card at 1–2 o'clock

MODIFIER Softbox on flash / White card stock or silver reflector on shadow side

POWER [INSERT — e.g. 1/4 power at 2.5ft]

CAMERA [INSERT — Aperture / ISO / Shutter]

FILL RATIO White card 2ft = soft fill / Silver 1ft = strong fill / Black card = absorb shadows

BEST FOR All food, product, and lifestyle — most used real-world setup

MOOD Controlled · Professional · Balanced · Clean

Guess How I Lit This

3 setups. Study the image. Make your guess before hitting reveal.

QUESTION 01 OF 03

Look at this image for 10 seconds. The shadow falls directly behind the subject, barely visible. The colors are bright and even. What clock position is the light?



QUIZ IMAGE 01
FRONT-LIT PRODUCT OR FOOD SHOT

Upload: a clean, flat, evenly lit shot from your portfolio



A — 12 O'Clock (Back Light)



B — 9 O'Clock (Side Light)



C — 6 O'Clock (Front Light)



D — 10 O'Clock (¾ Back)

QUESTION 02 OF 03

The subject has a glowing rim along the back left edge. The front of the subject is mostly in shadow. There is no visible shadow falling toward the camera. What clock position?



QUIZ IMAGE 02
RIM-LIT / BACK-LIT SHOT

Upload: a back-lit or ¾ back-lit shot showing rim glow



A — 6 O'Clock (Front Light)



B — 10–11 O'Clock (¾ Back)



C — 3 O'Clock (Side Right)



D — 7 O'Clock (¾ Front)

QUESTION 03 OF 03

Half the subject is fully lit. The other half falls into deep shadow. Every texture on the lit side is razor sharp. What clock position is this light, and what modifier would you guess?



QUIZ IMAGE 03
HIGH-CONTRAST SIDE-LIT SHOT

Upload: a dramatic side-lit textured shot — steak, bread, bark, etc.



A — 6 O'Clock, Softbox



B — 12 O'Clock, Bare Flash



C — 9 O'Clock, Hard Light or Gridded Flash



D — 7 O'Clock, Umbrella

FREE DOWNLOAD

Download the Chapter 1 Lighting Sheet

All 6 setups. Clock positions, modifiers, and example shots in one printable reference card.

DOWNLOAD PDF — CHAPTER 1

RETAKE THE QUIZ

More chapters dropping soon — follow FK Media for updates.

COMING NEXT

CHAPTER 02

2-Light Setups — Key + Fill, Key + Background,
Key + Rim



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